

TORAHSCOPE
H A F T A R A H
E X H O R T A T I O N S

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Life Examined and Understood
Through the Grid of the Torah

William Mark Huey



TORAHSCOPE

HAFTARAH EXHORTATIONS

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edited by J.K. McKee

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Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

Special terms unique to this publication that may be used have been provided in this chart:

Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	LXX: Septuagint
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	m. Mishnah
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	NEB: New English Bible (1970)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	NIV: New International Version (1984)
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)	NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>	NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
Grk: Greek	RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	t. Tosefta
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)	Tanakh: the Old Testament
Heb: Hebrew	TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
KJV: King James Version	TWOT: <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
	YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

Annual Torah Reading Schedule

These are the weekly Torah and Haftarah portions, as employed in both the traditional Synagogue and today's Messianic Jewish congregations

KEY:

A: Ashkenazic S: Sephardic*

[] denote differences between traditional Jewish and Christian verse order

GENESIS

Bereisheet "In the beginning"

Genesis 1:1-6:8

Isaiah 42:5-43:10 (A); 42:5-21 (S)

Lekh-Lekha "Get yourself out"

Genesis 12:1-17:27

Isaiah 40:27-41:16

Chayei Sarah "Sarah's life"

Genesis 23:1-25:18

1 Kings 1:1-31

V'yeitzei "He went out"

Genesis 28:10-32:2

Hosea 12:12-14:10 (A); 11:7-12:12 (S)

V'yaishev "He continued living"

Genesis 37:1-40:23

Amos 2:6-3:8

V'yigash "He approached"

Genesis 44:18-47:27

Ezekiel 37:15-28

Noach "Noah"

Genesis 6:9-11:32

Isaiah 54:1-55:5 (A); 54:1-10 (S)

V'yeira "He appeared"

Genesis 18:1-22:24

2 Kings 4:1-37 (A); 4:1-23 (S)

Toldot "History"

Genesis 25:19-28:9

Malachi 1:1-2:7

V'yishlach "He sent"

Genesis 32:3-36:43

Hosea 11:7-12:12 (A); Obadiah 1:1-21 (S)

Mikkeitz "At the end"

Genesis 41:1-44:17

1 Kings 3:15-4:1

V'yechi "He lived"

Genesis 47:28-50:26

1 Kings 2:1-12

EXODUS

Shemot "Names"

Exodus 1:1-6:1

Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23 (A);

Jeremiah 1:2-3 (S)

Bo "Go"

Exodus 10:1-13:16

Jeremiah 46:13-28

Yitro "Jethro"

Exodus 18:1-20:23[26]

Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6[6-7] (A); 6:1-13 (S)

V'eira "I appeared"

Exodus 6:2-9:35

Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

B'shalach "After he had let go"

Exodus 13:17-17:16

Judges 4:4-5:31 (A); 5:1-31 (S)

Mishpatim "Rulings"

Exodus 21:1-24:18

Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26

* Ashkenazic Jews are largely those from Eastern and Northern Europe, and Sephardic Jews are largely those from Spain and Muslim lands.

Terumah “Contribution”

Exodus 25:1-27:19

1 Kings 5:26-6:13

Ki Tisa “When you take”

Exodus 30:11-34:35

1 Kings 18:1-39 (A); 18:20-39 (S)

Pequdei “Accounts”

Exodus 38:21-40:38

1 Kings 7:51-8:21 (A); 7:40-50 (S)

Tetzaveh “You shall command”

Exodus 27:20-30:10

Ezekiel 43:10-27

V'yak'heil “He assembled”

Exodus 35:1-38:20

1 Kings 7:40-50 (A); 7:13-26 (S)

LEVITICUS**Vayikra** “He called”

Leviticus 1:1-5:26[6:7]

Isaiah 43:21-44:23

Shemini “Eighth”

Leviticus 9:1-11:47

2 Samuel 6:1-7:17 (A); 6:1-19 (S)

Metzora “Leper”

Leviticus 14:1-15:33

2 Kings 7:3-20

Kedoshim “Holy Ones”

Leviticus 19:1-20:27

Amos 9:7-15 (A); Ezekiel 20:2-20 (S)

B'har “On Mount”

Leviticus 25:1-26:2

Jeremiah 32:6-27

Tzav “Give an order”

Leviticus 6:1[8]-8:36

Jeremiah 7:21-8:3; 9:22-23

Tazria “She conceives”

Leviticus 12:1-13:59

2 Kings 4:42-5:19

Acharei Mot “After the death”

Leviticus 16:1-18:30

Ezekiel 22:1-19 (A); 22:1-16 (S)

Emor “Speak”

Leviticus 21:1-24:23

Ezekiel 44:15-31

B'chuqotai “By My regulations”

Leviticus 26:3-27:34

Jeremiah 16:19-17:24

NUMBERS**Bamidbar** “In the wilderness”

Numbers 1:1-4:20

Hosea 2:1-22

Beha'alot'kha “When you set up”

Numbers 8:1-12:16

Zechariah 2:14-4:7

Korach “Korah”

Numbers 16:1-18:32

1 Samuel 11:14-12:22

Balak “Balak”

Numbers 22:2-25:9

Micah 5:6-6:8

Naso “Take”

Numbers 4:21-7:89

Judges 13:2-25

Shelakh-Lekha “Send on your behalf”

Numbers 13:1-15:41

Joshua 2:1-24

Chukat “Regulation”

Numbers 19:1-22:1

Judges 11:1-33

Pinchas “Phinehas”

Numbers 25:10-30:1[29:40]

1 Kings 18:46-19:21

Mattot “Tribes”
Numbers 30:2[1]-32:42
Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

Mas’ei “Stages”
Numbers 33:1-36:13
Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4 (A);
2:4-28; 4:1-2 (S)

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim “Words”
Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22
Isaiah 1:1-27

V’et’chanan “And I besought”
Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11
Isaiah 40:1-26

Ekev “Because”
Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25
Isaiah 49:14-51:3

Re’eih “See”
Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17
Isaiah 54:11-55:5

Shoftim “Judges”
Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9
Isaiah 51:12-52:12 (or finish at 53:12)

Ki-Teitzei “When you go out”
Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19
Isaiah 54:1-10 (or finish at 52:13)

Ki-Tavo “When you come”
Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8
Isaiah 60:1-22

Nitzavim “Standing”
Deuteronomy 29:9[10]-30:20
Isaiah 61:10-63:9

V’yeilekh “He went”
Deuteronomy 31:1-30
Hosea 14:2-10; Micah 7:18-20; Joel 2:15-27

Ha’azinu “Hear”
Deuteronomy 32:1–52
2 Samuel 22:1–22:51

V’zot Ha’berakhah “This is the blessing”
Deuteronomy 33:1–34:12
Joshua 1:1–18 (A); 1:1-9 (S)

The current Torah and Haftarah reading dates, are available online
via the Outreach Israel Ministries website: www.outreachisrael.net

INTRODUCTION

Since 2002, Outreach Israel Ministries has been faithfully offering a commentary on the weekly Torah portions. I know that this has been very useful to the diverse groups of Messianic Believers that we reach out to around the world, who appreciate our balanced approach in wanting to bring unity to Jews and non-Jews, focusing our attention on the work of the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus) and the restoration of the Body of Messiah. As beneficial as it has been for me to direct our studies every week to the Torah, there is a strong need for today's Messianics to diversify their Biblical pursuits and consider more from the Scriptures. This has led and motivated me to compile a series of exhortations on the complimentary Haftarah reading associated with each Torah *parashah*. I want each of us to be instructed from the Prophets and Writings, and to be more consciously considering the great treasure of God's Word every week!

What I have discovered, from any person who is committed to examining the weekly Torah portion, is that once you begin to seriously study and reflect upon Moses' Teaching (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), you naturally have an inclination to want to enhance what you have learned. The Torah makes up the foundation of the Holy Writ, but by no means is the whole of the Holy Writ. Even though traditional Judaism understandably focuses much of its weekly and yearly attention to the annual Torah cycle, Rabbis throughout the centuries have known that having some additional resources to draw upon is most critical. We need to all consider it a great blessing that there is an associated text from the Haftarah that we can derive additional spiritual insight and direction from.

What is the Haftarah? The Hebrew term *haftarah* (הַפְּטָרָה) means "conclusion" or "concluding portion." Normally, it is a short lesson given from the Prophets and the Writings which is thematically connected to something encountered in the weekly Torah portion. While the custom of publicly reading the Torah on a regular basis is easily traced to the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon (Ezra 7:10; Nehemiah 8:1-3)—who did not want to disobey the Lord and be cast into exile again—there are a variety of proposals as to how the custom of regularly considering a section from the Prophets and Writings developed. While access to the Prophets and Writings, and consideration of their spiritual messages, was something always available to the Jewish people in synagogues—it was probably not until the Maccabean crisis of the Second Century B.C.E.ⁱ that circumstances required these Scriptures to take on new importance.ⁱⁱ Ronald L. Eisenberg summarizes,

"Most scholars believe that the custom of adding a prophetic section after the Torah reading dates back to the days before the Hasmonean revolt of 167 B.C.E., when Antiochus

ⁱ Consult the *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* by TNN Press for a selection of articles on the Maccabean crisis and the development of *Chanukah* as a national holiday for the Jewish people.

ⁱⁱ Speaking of Judah Maccabee, 2 Maccabees 15:9 describes, "Encouraging them from the law and the prophets, and reminding them also of the struggles they had won, he made them the more eager."

Epiphanes issued a decree banning the public reading of the Torah. Since other public readings in the synagogue were still permitted, the Rabbis added the reading of prophetic verses that related directly or indirectly to the topic of the Torah reading scheduled for that week.^{miii}

Interestingly enough, the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) actually contain the earliest evidence attesting to the reading of a Haftarah selection, as Yeshua read from the scroll of Isaiah on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16-21), and Paul likewise was asked to deliver a report after the Law and the Prophets had been read (Acts 13:15). For any Messianic Believer who wants to see Yeshua “in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44), the need for us to be regularly considering the weekly Haftarah should be obvious. To read from the Haftarah is to do yet another thing that Yeshua did!

It is my fervent prayer that by expanding your review and contemplation of the Haftarah from the Prophets and Writings that your walk with the Lord will be further enlivened. I hope that these exhortations will be used to add even more depth to your understanding of His Word and plan for the ages, as we all seek to be effective Messianic Believers in God’s service today. With the Torah serving as our foundation, the Prophets and Writings continue to give us key instructions in how we can be fully blessed by our Heavenly Father. The commentary I offer you has been compiled specifically so you can achieve all things in Yeshua HaMashiach, the Savior of Israel. *To Him we give all the glory!*

May these exhortations from the Haftarah be used to encourage you to seek Him and His righteousness even further!

Until the restoration of all things....

William Mark Huey
Director, Outreach Israel Ministries

^{miii} Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 457.

An alternate opinion is offered by Avigdor Shinan, “The Bible in the Synagogue,” in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp 1932-1933, where he suggests that the decision to add a Haftarah selection from the Prophets, to the weekly Torah reading, was done as a polemic against the Samaritans who rejected the prophetic books.

COMMENTARY ON GENESIS HAFTARAH

Haftarah Bereisheet "Israel: The Light from Darkness!"

Isaiah 42:5-43:10 (A); 42:5-21 (S)

The recipients of the revelation from the Creator God, read in the opening few verses of Genesis, that the first recorded spoken words of the Almighty are: "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). Hovering over a formless and void Earth that was part of an earlier-created cosmos (Genesis 1:1), the omniscient Holy One knew that light was necessary for His Creation to proceed through time according to His preordained plans. He understood that light, as opposed to the absence of light, allowed Him to make a distinction between the light and the darkness—as it ultimately was divided into day and night (Genesis 1:14-19). He also foresaw a group of people who in the future would be declared a "light to the nations" in order to significantly share with humanity at large not only His ways, but Himself as the One True Creator God.

Fast forward to the words of the Prophet Isaiah, and we see that concept of "light" (Heb. *or*, אור) is used to describe a critical role for Israel as God's chosen people. Of all the nations that came forth from the union of Adam and Eve, there was always going to be one nation which was formed to be a "light" to the other nations. In God's plan for the world, in eternity past, He formulated the strategy of eventually selecting one nation among the others with the obligation to speak of the light of their understanding about Him, sharing His goodness with the other nations. A part of what that light would be is mentioned in the opening chapters of Genesis, as Eve is promised that her seed would crush the serpent:

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; **He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel**" (Genesis 3:15).

The light of revelation about the Creator and Israel's (intended) righteous status before Him was not simply for the sake of Israel's being chosen—but was to open the blind eyes of the prisoners encased in the darkness of their sin. The Prophet Isaiah declares,

"Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it, 'I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and **I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations**, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison" (Isaiah 42:5-7; cf. Luke 2:32).

The responsibility placed upon Israel to be a witness for the Most High is reiterated at the end of this week's Haftarah selection. Not being a light to the nations is just as bad as disobeying the commandments of God in the Torah. His people are without excuse if they do not fulfill their role as His representatives on Earth. After all, from God's perspective, some chosen nation needs to explain and enlighten the rest of the world—people who are all in relative darkness—about who He is:

“All the nations have gathered together so that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare this and proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, “It is true.” **You are My witnesses,’ declares the LORD, ‘And My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me”** (Isaiah 43:9-10).

The concept of Israel being a light to the nations is understood centuries later by the Apostle Paul, who recognized his personal role as a steward of the mysteries of God. Paul recognized that the mystery of God had unfolded from just general promises about Israel being a light, to now being a bearer of the good news about Yeshua the Messiah and His redemptive work as the Light of the World (John 8:12). He wrote the Believers in Corinth about being found worthy of the calling to be God's servants, teaching those in darkness about the mysteries of God. In view of our modern-day responsibilities, Paul's words of admonition are quite sobering to those who are taking their walk with the Messiah seriously:

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Messiah and **stewards of the mysteries of God**. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, **but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts**; and then each man's praise will come to him from God” (1 Corinthians 4:1-5).

Everyone who claims to be a part of God's people needs to remember that ultimately, whether we are corporately the light to the nations, or whether we are individually declaring the work of Yeshua—the Light of the World—all of our acts are going to be brought to light by the Lord Himself. Whatever our motives are, whatever is hidden in our hearts, will be revealed by the light of the Holy One. He will bring light to all that is hidden in our hearts, especially if some things are darkened by the deceitfulness of sin! Let those motives brought to light be found to be holy and righteous, as opposed to evil.

Does this give you another perspective on your role as a “light to the nations”? What are your motives for pointing other people to the Messiah? Or Torah study? Or Haftarah exhortations? How are you handling the mysteries of God as they have been revealed to you? Are you able to handle them with the skill and eloquence becoming of someone transformed by the gospel?

When it is all said and done, will God reward you? Or will you be among those who thought they knew Him, but in the end were merely using His name for dark and deceitful purposes? These are the people who thought they knew the Light, but their motives were actually hidden by the darkness in their hearts. Yeshua's warning to us on this matter is quite clear:

“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS’” (Matthew 7:22-23; cf. Psalm 6:8).

Being a part of Israel requires responsibility. *We are to be God’s light to the nations.* Take this very seriously as you bring your light into this darkened world—to those in search of answers to the mysteries of God!

Haftarah Noah **“Walking by Faith”**

Isaiah 54:1-55:5 (A); 54:1-10 (S)

The cataclysmic Flood described in *Noah* (Genesis 6:9-11:32) is undoubtedly the most memorable event that most of you will be considering this week. However, it is the post-deluge Noahic Covenant that God unilaterally established with Noah and his progeny, which is reflected upon by the Prophet Isaiah as he attempted to encourage his contemporaries in Ancient Judah. Ultimately, it is the reference to a “covenant of peace” that the Holy One unilaterally instituted with His people, which is something worthy of shouting for joy.

If you will recall, God was so aggravated with the corrupt and violent direction of the human race that He had to destroy all the people of the Earth, except Noah and his immediate family:

“Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth’” (Genesis 6:11-13).

Further illumination about how an angry God was going to handle evil in the future is recorded after righteous Noah offered up sacrifices to Him as the Flood waters recede. Note that God declared what the evil heart of humanity is, promising to extend grace even though He knew unrighteousness would continue among people:

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, **‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease’**” (Genesis 8:20-22).

In a comparative manner, the blessing that God would never forsake Israel is what Isaiah describes as he foresaw and understood the brief moment in time when the Lord in His anger, would hide His face from His idolatrous people, allowing the Babylonian exile to take place. However, as this section of the prophecy declares, the punishment upon Israel would only be temporary. After briefly forsaking His people, He would eventually restore them with great compassion: